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"And Carthage souls be glutted with our bloods":

Marlowe's Lucanian Dido in *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*

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by

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Report

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Dedication

For Lindy, my sister, my best friend,
and the strongest woman I know.
And for Eamonn, who models the selflessness I strive to have.
I love you both so much.

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Abstract

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

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Despite most scholars agreeing that Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage* was composed fairly contemporaneously with his adaptation of *Pharsalia* 1, *Lucans First Booke Translated Line for Line*, few have recognized the intertextuality between the two works. This paper will consider Marlowe's relationship with Lucan's 1st century epic poem—both through his own posthumously published translation as well as selections he might have encountered during his petty school and graduate school study—and argue for the presence of distinctly Lucanian conventions in his drama, particularly in the portrayal of his protagonist, Dido. By revealing the Lucanian features of his play, in narrative structure as well as verbal echoes with the *Pharsalia*'s Cornelia, *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage* exposes Marlowe's "republican imagination" and allows us to discern a political commentary in the seeming playfulness of his Virgilian parody. His employment of Lucanian devices is his attempt to imitate and outdo

the self-proclaimed *plus quam*[ness] of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. In doing so, he introduces his own political subtext to the stage and interrogates, through the unassuming guise of child actors, the Elizabethan monarch's appropriation of a Trojan ancestry.

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Introduction

It is only in more recent years that scholars have considered Christopher Marlowe's play, *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, as more than a messy schoolboy's attempt at adapting the first four books of Virgil's *Aeneid*.[1] Similarly, his *Lucans First Booke Translated Line for Line*, posthumously published in 1600, has long been resigned to the status of *juvenalia*, and thus neglected in serious scholarly examinations. *Lucans First Booke* hardly reads as some vestige of a school translation exercise, despite scholarly fidelity to its posthumous title.[2] Any Latinist who reads Marlowe's "translation" would admit its grammatical and literary liberty with the original Latin text, just as Roma Gill argues that "the intelligence here [in *Lucans First Booke*] is greater than that of the schoolboy, and the carefulness more than that demanded by a mere school exercise."[3] Despite some disagreements about dating, which I will address briefly in the following paragraphs, it seems that Marlowe wrote *Dido* and *Lucans First Booke* fairly contemporaneously, whether that be early or late, during his unfortunately brief career.

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[1] See especially Patrick Cheney, *Marlowe's Republican Authorship: Lucan, Liberty, and the Sublime* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) who notes that the play was previously considered nothing more than *juvenalia*. To my greater point, scholarship has focused little on *The Tragedie of Dido, Queene of Carthage,* despite issues of dating. Sara Munson Deats, *Sex, Gender, and Desire in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1997), 89-124 considers gender in the play, while others have considered rhetoric and Dido's relationship to Elizabeth I, such as Deane Williams, "Dido, Queen of England." *ELH* 73 (2006): 31-59.

[2] For the sake of brevity, I will abbreviate to *Dido* and *Lucans First Booke* in the following portions of this paper.

[3] Roma Gill, "Marlowe, Lucan, and Sulpitius," *The Review of English Studies* 24 (1973): 406; ibid, "Marlowe and the Art of Translation," in *"A Poet and a Filthy Play-maker": New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS, 1988), 331.

The few more recent scholarly discussions about *Lucans First Booke* attempt to take his translation more seriously, such as James Shapiro, Allyna Ward, and Gill but hesitate to discuss its relationship to Marlowe's dramatic writings, apart from those most explicitly appealing to the anti-imperial narrative of Lucan's poem, such as *Edward II* and the *Tamburlaine* plays.[4] Both *Lucans First Booke* and *Dido* continue to be sparsely included in conversations of the Marlovian corpus, and Gill even ventures that they are "linked by neither time nor form."[5] In response to such neglect, this paper will contribute to the few scholarly conversations that wish to rescue these works from the margins of the Marlovian corpus and argue for a greater recognition of the Lucanian structure of his *Dido* in order to demonstrate that Marlowe identified himself as a Lucanian figure writing within an tradition defined by its critique of mainstream political narrative.

While lengthy conjecture about the dating of these works remains a dispute for another paper, most scholars agree that Marlowe wrote *Dido* sometime during his

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[4] See James Shapiro, " 'Metre meete to furnish Lucans style': Reconsidering Marlowe's Lucan," in *"A Poet and a Filthy Play-maker": New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS, 1988), 315-26. Cheney, in *Marlowe's Republican Authorship*, discusses *Edward II* and *Tamburlaine* with the greater themes of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Gill, in both her 1973 and 1988 articles, considers *Dido* and *Lucans First Booke*, but never exclusively. She groups all his "early" works together, including Ovid's *Elegies* and *Hero and Leander*. Marlowe's proficiency with blank verse in his dramatic writings as well as his decision to translate Lucan's dactylic hexameter into blank verse are considered by Gill in "Marlowe and the Art of Translation." Shapiro, "Metre meet to furnish Lucans style," 324 argues for his use of blank verse as evidence of its later composition and craft, not its *juvenalia*, especially when the early 1590s "saw a renewed interest in Lucan by contemporaries like Daniel and Drayton. At such a point an accomplished and ambitious poet might well have decided to turn his hand to the archetypal and as yet untranslated work on civil war."

[5] Gill, "Marlowe and the Art of Translation," 327. Gill's earlier article, "Marlowe, Lucan, and Sulpitius," maintains that *Lucans First Booke* and *Dido* are both *juvenalia,* but still exemplify a significant amount of maturity and genius in their composition. Perhaps one of the reasons the play has been so long considered among the *juvenalia* of Marlowe is due to its performance by male children's troupes. Douglas Cole, *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy* (Westport: Greenwood, 1995), 43-5 briefly notes this tendency in scholarship, while still admitting "[w]e have no firm evidence of when *Dido* was written, nor of the extent of Nashe's collaboration in its composition." The perceived maturity of content performed by adult actors as opposed to the content performed by children actors seems to have influenced how scholarship treats the seriousness of *Dido* as a tragedy.

education at Cambridge, making it his first—or at least a very early—dramatic composition.[6] Although some scholars prefer to date the play later, they can at least agree that it occupies the status of either his first drama or one of his last. Just as with *Dido*, the composition of his *Lucans First Booke Translated Line for Line* eludes any definitive dating, and scholarship polemically places it as predecessor to his dramas or as their successor, written in the final year(s) of his life.[7]

Part of the difficulty in justifying a conversation between *Dido* and *Lucans First Booke* has focused on determining when Marlowe began reading Lucan and how familiar he was with all ten books of the *Pharsalia*. During his time at King's School in Canterbury and subsequently during his graduate work at Cambridge, Marlowe would have read Lucan, according to the Eton curriculum.[8] T.W. Baldwin's comprehensive

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[6] See David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004), 49 who dates the play to King's School (~1584-5) and labels it "evidently his earliest play" as its content "harks back to his grammar-school days." Most other scholars who date it early agree it was written while at Cambridge, but it is unclear. Since Marlowe had to play catch-up at Cambridge with his rhetorical and declamatory training, it is impossible to know when he would have read large selections of Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan. He certainly memorized passages of these authors beginning in petty school.

[7] This late dating of *Lucans First Booke* is a particularly attractive argument for those who wish to understand Marlowe as living Lucan's legacy, that is if Marlowe's *Pharsalia* is unfinished because and/or if his political involvement too cost him his life. Gill prefers to date it earlier since it seemingly resembles schoolroom exercises of translation. "Marlowe, Lucan, and Sulpitius," 26. She also refers to *Dido, Queen of Carthage* as a "translation" of the *Aeneid*.

[8] Thomas W. Baldwin notes that "the curriculum, requirements, etc. for Worcester in 1544 are an exact duplicate of those at Canterbury, as are the statutes in general" and concludes that "it is probable that the curriculum for all these cathedral schools was uniformly that of Eton and Winchester as in the known instances of Canterbury and Worcester." *William Shakpere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke, Volumes 1-2* (Urbana: U of Illinois, 1944), 170-1. Edward Paleit's more recent study of Lucan's pedagogical frequency recognizes his importance during the "Middles Ages, when the *Bellum Civile* was much studied and copied," and he argues for his "relative unimportance" in the grammar schools during the 16th century. His evidence mostly cites Eramus' *Adagia*. He speculates that Lucan " 'or some other,' typically Silius Italicus, [was] read by the master to the students for one hour a week," which "contrasts with core authors who were to be learnt, translated, and studied by pupils on a more intensive basis." Of course, such speculation admits that some grammar schools still featured Lucan as an important part of their curriculum, such as Baldwin who "puts [Lucan] on par with Latin poets like Ovid or Virgil." The evidence for Marlowe's study of Lucan at Cambridge is much more convincing since "Lucan appears in nineteen booklists, placing him within a 'third division' of Latin poets comprising Juvenal (twenty-four occurrences), Seneca's *Tragedies*

study on early modern school curriculum notes that Lucan's *Pharsalia* would have probably appeared later in his studies, since it was considered the most advanced demonstration of Latin poetry for its lauded rhetorical feats.[9] Marlowe's familiarity with the entirety of the Lucanian epic, then, is defensible because of its inclusion in his academic study. Considering Marlowe's non-traditional route to the university—and his maturity in age—he may have encountered the later books of the *Pharsalia* only in schoolroom translation exercises and selected verses recited by his schoolmasters, opting to complete thorough study of Lucan independently.

Thus, even if his translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia* 1 postdates *Dido*, he would not have been discovering and translating the Neronian epic for the first time in the 1590s, and we should not assume that his choice to translate only the first book of the *Pharsalia* indicates his study was limited to it.[10] In fact, the possibility of a later dating for *Lucans First Booke* indicates that Lucan's influence in Marlowe's work is more pervasive than scholarship has previously admitted, as Shapiro has speculated.[11]

(twenty-two), and Martial (eighteen)." Edward Paleit determines that although "Lucan was not systematically excluded in a way suggesting overt disapproval or censorship[,] he was hardly a canonical author." *War, Liberty, and Caesar: Responses to Lucan's Bellum Civile, ca. 1580-1650* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013), 33-9. The evidence for Marlowe's reading and careful study of Lucan remains mostly based upon his composition of *Lucans First Booke* and the many Lucanian allusions in his other works. The outline Baldwin provides for the authors studied in the Eton/Worcester curriculum are Terence, Justin, Cicero, Caesar, Ovid, Virgil, Lucian, Valerius Maximus, Lucius Florus, Martial, Catullus, Horace, Lucan, Aesop, and Cato. *William Shakpere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke, Volume 1,* 354-8.

[9] Harry Levin, *Christopher Marlowe: The Overreacher* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), 27. At the time, the *Pharsalia* was the only Latin poem studied in school that was unaccompanied by an English translation. Some scholars speculate this anomaly may have motivated Marlowe's translation of Lucan. I think Marlowe's relationship to the epic should not be so simplified, for it seems Lucanian themes were deeply influential to his own work.

[10] In fact, it is probable that his educational exposure to Lucan would have included more emphasis on the later books of the epic, particularly the *pathos* of Cornelia's lament in Book 8.

[11] Shapiro, " 'Metre meete to furnish Lucans style': Reconsidering Marlowe's Lucan," 324.

The obvious Virgilian allusion of *Dido*, embodied in its main character, precludes modern scholars from analyzing *Dido* outside of conversations not mediated by the large, looming figure of Augustan epic. The exception of course, is Ovid, who exhumes Dido in his *Heroides VII*.[12] Scholars such as M.L. Stapleton, Sara Munson Deats, and Timothy Crowley generally concede the comic moments in *Dido* to Ovid, but still privilege the exhausting voice of "the father of Roman epic" in their consideration of *Dido*'s literary allusions.[13] Lucan remains once more upstaged: this time by Ovid. Although we cannot exclude Virgil (or Ovid, for that matter) from our consideration of the play, since it features the namesake of his most famous [female] character, this paper will require his temporary silence in deference to Lucan's *Pharsalia*, for Marlowe, like Lucan, found Virgil's heroic myth of Rome troublesome.[14]

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[12] See Deats, *Sex, Gender, and Desire in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, 89-124; M.L. Stapleton, *Marlowe's Ovid: The Elegies in the Marlowe Canon* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014); and Timothy Crowley, "Arms and the Boy: Marlowe's Aeneas and the Parody of Imitation in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*," *English Literary Renaissance* 38 (2008): 410. Part of the reason that scholars are so willing to include Ovid's influence in conversations about the play is not only Ovid's explicit adaption of Dido in his work, but also because Marlowe translated Ovid's *Amores*.

[13] Marlowe imitates Lucan's own complicated relationship with the Virgilian tradition, being both hostile toward the victor's epic of conquest and the founding of Rome and at the same time recognizing it as the necessary reference for political stability, as David Quint notes: "The anti-Virgilian rhetoric with which Lucan describes the perspective of the lost republican cause—the role of Fortune, the imagery of formlessness and fragmentation, a historical narrative indefinitely suspended and left open—has to be measured against a Virgilian plot of imperial destiny, unity, historical continuity, which, when applied to Rome's foreign rule, the *Pharsalia* scarcely questions and whose factuality the poet could not deny if he wanted to. This is not, then, simply the dilemma of the latecomer poet who can only react against the great predecessor in the predecessor's own terms. Lucan's ideological position as both republican and imperialist —a position whose potential contradictions his poem both hints at and backs away from—places him both outside and inside Virgil's camp." *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton UP, 1993), 157.

[14] Although this argument privileges the influence of Lucan in Marlowe's work, his breaking of convention can ever only understood as it is referential to Virgil, as Quint concludes in his discussion of Lucan's tradition of epic transgression: "The sheer weight of epic tradition, whose formal conventions, themselves by now heavily freighted with nationalist and imperialist ideas, Lucan satirically bends out of shape, even to the breaking point, but never abandons." *Epic and Empire*, 157.

Indeed, Virgil did not invent Dido, despite his literary creation becoming, in its reception, a practically historical source for the heroine due to its fame and *pathos*. As noted already, Marlowe's schooling required more reading than antiquity's canonical Virgil and Ovid, and reading the *Pharsalia* after the *Aeneid* would not have only reinforced its chronological relationship with Virgil, but more importantly, would have allowed him to discern the epic conventions Lucan so blatantly criticizes.[15] Marlowe's attraction to the *Pharsalia* reveals his satirical interpretation of the *Aeneid*, and this point deserves our attention.

Marlowe's notable interest in (and commiseration with) the *Pharsalia*, born during his years at King's School and at Cambridge and strengthened by his composition of *Lucans First Booke*, must inform comprehensive readings of Marlowe's *Dido.* I hope to demonstrate that by privileging the effect of Lucan, rather than Virgil, on Marlowe's composition of *Dido*, Marlowe reveals himself as a Lucanian, and he too writes as the cynical successor—the hapless victim—of the imperialist political model Virgilian epic engendered. The influence of Virgil's *Aeneid* exists, then, in Marlowe's *Dido* through its previous distortion in the *Pharsalia*.

Patrick Cheney, Rick Bowers, and Crowley all speculate some connection between *Dido* and the *Pharsalia*, but consider only the broader themes of Lucan's poem:

[15] See note 8. It is uncertain whether Marlowe would have been acquainted with earlier, historic traditions of Dido's life, such as Trogus' account in his *Philippic Histories*. The date of Trogus' *Histories* remains widely speculative. J.C. Yardley's and Waldemar Heckel's edition of the text claims Trogus was "roughly contemporary with Livy (59 BC—AD 17);" they note also the popularity of Trogus during the Medieval period, "from which period more than two hundred manuscripts have survived." *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 1-6. While Baldwin include Justin's Histories in the Eton curriculum, he does not specify which books students would have read. *William Shakpere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke, Volume 1,* 354.

its political and cosmic chaos, its lament of the lost republic, and its fear of tyrannical power. Crowley's article on the play, published a year before Cheney's book, acknowledges Lucan's possible influence on Marlowe's *Dido*, but fails to provide a thorough examination of the conversation between *Dido* and the *Pharsalia*.[16] Bowers only indirectly references Lucan's influence on Dido by admitting the inherent campiness and subsequent satire of Virgil through the play's plot and performance, but he does not explore how these elements may be Lucanian.[17] Although Cheney devotes most of a chapter in *Marlowe's Republican Authorship* to *Dido*, the relationship his argument establishes between Lucan and *Dido*'s Dido positions her always as "Marlowe's icon of the female victim of empire."[18] All three fail to recognize Marlowe's *Dido* as a character specifically conversing with characters in Lucan's epic, namely Cornelia and Pompey. More significantly, they do not consider how the performance of the play by young boy actors would have conveyed a Lucanian effect by adding even more parody to Marlowe's adaptation.[19]

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[16] Crowley, "Arms and the Boy," 408-9. Virgil and Ovid seem to have dominated the discussion of Marlowe's Dido since most scholars consider "Vergil and Ovid [to be] the premier poetic models" of young boys' educational experience (409).

[17] Rick Bowers, "Hysterics, High Camp, and *Dido Queene of Carthage*." In *Marlowe's Empery: Expanding His Critical Contexts*, ed. Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2002), 95-106.

[18] Cheney, *Marlowe's Republican Authorship*, 81.

[19] Ibid, 83 offhandedly suggests that "Dido's resounding complaints of sorrow and misfortune owe in part to Cornelia's complaints in the *Pharsalia*," specifically *Pharsalia* 5.759-74. His analysis finishes with this brief sentence, and it seems his only reason for bringing up Cornelia is the role of her spouse, Pompey, as "the victim of Caesar's empire." In an earlier chapter, he mentions Cornelia more thoroughly, but this time as the feature of Thomas Kyd's 1594 dramatic translation from the French of Robert Garnier's 1574 *Cornélie*. Again, Cornelia's significance, according to Cheney, remains predicated in her status as the wife of Pompey, "an Elizabethan icon lamenting the Fall of the Republic, a decisive literary mourning over the 'providential' propaganda of Elizabethan culture" since she "foreground[s] the Republican wife as a 'spectator' unable to affect 'political events, reduced to mourning and endurance" (35). Cheney's surface reading of the couple as the portrait of romantic *pathos* and marital commitment, a couple analogous to Milton's Adam and Eve, ignores the inherent narcissism of Pompey's feelings for Cornelia, the narcissism

This paper will argue, then, for a reconsideration of Marlowe's Dido as a Lucanian Dido, a Dido who references Virgil *through* Lucan's critique of the *Aeneid* in his *Pharsalia*. Of course, because the original text of the *Pharsalia* is in Latin, it is difficult to assert any repetition of exact language with the English blank verse of *Dido* apart from that found in *Lucans First Booke*. This obstacle need not be significant, however, since Marlowe's familiarity with the *Pharsalia* is easily apparent through the verbal and thematic echoes of *Pharsalia* 5 and 8 in his Dido.

Marlowe's Dido animates the *Pharsalia* in a fittingly *plus quam* ("more than," or "worse than") adaption of the heroine, as not analogous to one character, but an embodiment of both Cornelia and Pompey.[20] By framing Dido as both wife and husband, lover and beloved, she becomes more powerful—and more dangerous—than her Virgilian portrayal, for she is a woman who possesses equal competence in a masculine role as she does in a feminine role. Aeneas becomes an unnecessary prop on Marlowe's stage, and, as I will argue in the following chapter, his character is parodic and absurb, while hers remains persuasive. In appropriate Lucanian style, Marlowe writes his version of Virgil more *plus quam* (*plus plus quam*!) than Lucan's, emulating his predecessor by his own epic invention.

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apparent in Miltonic Adam's own uxoriousness. Pompey's farewell to Cornelia in *Pharsalia* 5.757 bids her to remain always *pars optima Magni* ("the best part of Magnus/Pompey"). For discussion of the "uneasy republicanism" of Kyd's Cornelia, see Curtis Perry, "The Uneasy Republicanism of Thomas Kyd's *Cornelia*," *Criticism* 48 (2006): 535-55.

[20] *Phar*. 1.1 *Bella per Emanthios plus quam civilia campos* ("wars worse than civil throughout the Emanthian fields…"). *Plus quam* ("worse than," "more than") saturates the thematic purpose of Lucan's epic, proclaiming it to be more grotesque, more violent, more poetic than any of his epic predecessors, but pointedly responding to Virgil's *Aeneid*. For discussion of the implications of *plus quam* in Lucan's invocation, see Paul Roche, *De Bello Civili: Book I* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009) 100-3. Roche notes that the "theme of transgressing boundaries or limits is representative of Lucan's subject matter, imagery, and narrative technique…[and] the use of the phrase reveals a wider application of the theme of transgression" since "there is certainly a preoccupation with the crossing of geographical boundaries within the text."

To understand the inherently Lucanian nature of Dido's narrative, my claim will be grounded in the argument of David Quint's "Epics of the Defeated," which asserts the less canonical epic tradition of the *Pharsalia* is a subversive rebuttal to the defining narrative of Roman epic, the *Aeneid*. Thus, it will become apparent that Marlowe's setting—Carthage, not Troy or Italy—and selection of *dramatis personae*—young, high voiced boys—function as the antithesis to the Virgilian Aeneas, since it upends Aeneas' narrative of virility, colonization, and victory and relocates the narrative back to Africa with the spotlight on the resurrected Carthaginian queen (and her chorus of children!) whom Virgil long slaughtered in *Aeneid* 4. On the early modern stage, Marlowe's Dido inevitably evoked modern lore of England's Elissa, Elizabeth I, and her embrace of a mythical Trojan ancestry. Amidst his satire on Virgilian *gravitas*, his Dido gestures at the threat of tyranny by appropriating Virgilian imperialism and its tiresome Aenean piety.

David Quint and the Sub-Canonical

In his broad discussion of the epic tradition, both ancient and modern, Quint challenges the "secondary canonical status" for those epics relegated to the shadows of Homer, Virgil, and Milton.[21] His chapter, "Epics of the Defeated," considers Lucan, Alonso de Ercilla, and Agrippa d'Aubigné. According to Quint, what determines this secondary status for these epics is not their deficiency in content, metrics, oratory, or poetic style, but rather their conscious subversion of the "tradition on the side of the victors":

> Statius' ode [*Silva* 2.7, which elegizes Lucan and his poetic feats] is the more affecting because it affirms what its author probably knows is not the case: Lucan would not supplant Virgil as the great Roman epic poet (as the end of the *Thebaid* attests); nor would the republic return. Lucan did, however, initiate a rival, anti-Virgilian tradition of epic whose major poems—the *Pharsalia* itself, *La Araucana* of Alonso de Ercilla, and *Les Tragiques* of Agrippa d'Aubigné—embrace the cause of the politically defeated. These works have been consigned, or perhaps consigned themselves, to a secondary canonical status in the history of the genre, never quite achieving the same rank as the *Aeneid*, the *Lusíadas,* or the *Gerusalemme liberata*, the poems of the dominant tradition—the tradition

[21] Although the canonical status of Milton's *Paradise Lost* is unquestionable, he participates in the canon in a way more complicated than the others, as scholars have noted the subversive heroism of Satan which functions to challenge the tyranny of the Christian "God." For reference to Lucanian influence in Milton's depiction of Satan, see William Blissett, "Caesar and Satan," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 18 (1957): 221-32.

> on the side of the victors…Lucan's capacity to overgo the *Aeneid* is impaired because he speaks from the side of the losers, contesting a vision of history upheld not only by Virgil's epic but by the reality of imperial power…Lucan's deliberate deformation of Virgilian narrative structure is part, perhaps the largest part, of the political message of his poem.[22]

As Quint so eloquently argues, Lucan's *Pharsalia* evades the level of critical esteem of the *Aeneid*—both during the period of its composition as well as in later, particularly more modern, reception—due to its inherent hostility toward the Virgilian tradition, since he "speaks from the side of the losers." The cynical, derisive, chaotic tone of the poem, which has for many years been understood to demonstrate its lack of sophistication, functions instead as an intentional commentary on the narrative structure of the *Aeneid*. Lucan's *Pharsalia* contends with this attempt to disassemble the founding historical myth of imperialism. For Lucan, upsetting the Virgilian monarch of later Roman imperialism means interrogating the precedent of the victor writing history and problematizing imperialism's justification of itself through Virgilian "history."[23]

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[22] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 133-4.

[23] See Thomas Greene who notes that the "*Aeneid* is the classic statement of this high role ['living transmission and cultural re-creation'] because it gives substance to the role in two distinct ways. First, it narrates and valorizes a myth of precarious continuity…Virgil deals with the Homeric shadow, his own anxiety of influence, by putting it into his poem, by facing it literally on every page and by transmuting each minor form through context into something new and Roman. Thus his fable of transitivity was orchestrated everywhere by a transitive technique that demonstrated the fact of preservation but also the fact of transmutation. This special historical character of Virgil's poem makes it the central and supreme expression of Roman civilization." *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1982), 66-7. He argues that Virgil participates in the "cultural re-creation" of Rome through the epic form, and thus the Elizabethans recognized that their own cultural aetiology might be accessed through the myth of Roman aetiology. Ibid, 16-7.

The "deliberate deformation of Virgilian narrative structure" that Quite cites manifests itself so thoroughly in the content and structure of the poem that content and form become mutually entangled. The very structure of Lucan's epic mimics the chaos of Caesar's impending tyranny. While the *Aeneid* narrates the institution of order from disorder—Aeneas's abandonment of war-ravaged Troy to the founding of Roman civilization—, the *Pharsalia* bemoans the loss of order and civilization and the descent into the lawless inhumanity of imperialism through one-man rule. Forms of *nefas* ("impiety," "unspeakable sin") and *scelus* ("crime") appear a total of 130 times throughout the *Pharsalia*, verbally reiterating the inherent violation of order and peace by the execution of republican government:

> …And this drive [to dismemberment and formlessness] characterizes aspects of the larger poem, which resists what is sees as the illegitimate unity that imperial one-man rule has claimed to confer upon the Roman body politic…The epic narrative, which classical literary theory describes with the metaphor of the whole, well-knit body, is deliberately fragmented by Lucan to depict a world out of joint, a history that cannot be organized by imperial apologists into the plot of destiny…To portray history from the perspective of the lost republican cause and to counter the unifying historical fictions and narratives of imperial ideology, both bodies and poems must fall into pieces.[24]

[24] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 147.

The epic of the "lost republican cause" must necessarily be an epic "depict[ing] a world out of joint" and a "history that cannot be organized," since it positions itself as the antithesis to that history which has been appropriated as the "imperial ideology." *Pharsalia* 1 predicates its historical setting on the inversion, the dismembering, figuratively and literally, of civility and proper order through the renaming of Virgilian virtus: *scelerique nefando / nomen erit virtus*, which Marlowe translates "sin bear the name of virtue."[25] Virgilian *virtus* has now become indistinguishable from corruption, and law indistinguishable from lawlessness. Thus, the Lucanian tradition grounds its narrative in the complete inversion of—and consequent criticism of—the moral code for which the epic tradition aims to be an aetiology.

Lucans First Booke renders this dissolution of the epic tradition in the description of the cosmological response to "civil broils," in which the heavenly bodies, earth, and animals mimic the collapse of the Roman republic by deserting their proper places and behaviors:[26]

> …The lesser stars
>
> Which wont run their course through empty night
>
> At noonday mustered…
>
> …Titan himself throned in the midst of heaven,

[25] *Pharsalia,* 1.667-8; *Lucans First Booke*, lines 663. Very literally the translation of the Latin is "the name of unspeakable crime will be virtue." All translations of *Pharsalia* 1 will be Marlowe's, unless otherwise noted. Selections from later books of the *Pharsalia* will be Braund (1992). I will identify and provide my own translations when necessary. Mine own translations will mostly be shorter phrases or words difficult to render in English, rather than longer quotes from the *Pharsalia*. All Latin quotations included in this paper are from the 1928 Housman text in the Loeb edition. After much searching, I discovered that there is no updated Teubner or OCT for the Pharsalia, and the Housman edition (1927) is currently considered the standard text.

[26] *Lucans First Booke,* lines 14.

His burning chariot plunged in sable clouds,
And whelmed the world in darkness, making men
Despair of day...the vestal fires went out,
…The earth went off her hinges; and the Alps
Shook the old snow from off their trembling laps.
The ocean swelled as high as Spanish Calpe,
Or Atlas' head; their saints and household gods
Sweat tears to show the travails of their city.
Crowns fell from holy statues, ominous birds
Defiled the day, and wilde beasts were seen,
Leaving the woods, lodge in the streets of Rome.
Cattle were seen that muttered human speech:
…Clashing of arms was heard in untrod woods,
Shrill voices shrieked, and ghosts encounter men.
Those that inhabited the suburb fields
Fled… (*Lucans First Booke*, 523-70)

The cosmos behaves in such overwhelming confusion that the stars formerly appropriate to the night sky now refuse to "run their course through empty night" and instead "At noonday mustered" their brightness. Night becomes its antithesis, day, creating "men / [who] Despair of day." The whole earth itself responds to the upheaval, "off its hinges," and the delineation between civilized and savage blurs as "wilde beasts were seen, / Leaving the woods, lodge in the streets of Rome." Animals intrude into human domestic

space and even begin to speak human language as "[c]attle were seen that muttered human speech." This passage above exemplifies Quint's theoretical framework for the "epic of the defeated" because "the losers' epic insists that the victors enjoy no greater mastery over history than the vanquished, and it thus dispenses with the epic—a Virgilian teleological narrative—altogether."[27] *Lucans First Booke* describes the Virgilian world thrown into chaos, challenging our suspension of disbelief in the epic narrative as Lucan's/Marlowe's *Pharsalia* reveal(s) the ease with which the author manipulates even the cosmological elements.

The stars, moon, earth, and animals become the obliging props of a tradition performed by the Virgilian actors of a historical myth of victory, where the Aenean victor's account of the narrative alleges to be the "Virgilian teleological" narrative which *founded* and continues to ensure cosmological and social order. By refusing to participate in this privileged cosmogony, Lucanian tradition challenges and disarticulates Roman history (and its future) altogether. Marlowe's decision to stage the most famous episode of the *Aeneid* in another work demonstrates just how much Virgil's myth consists of literarily manipulated props and actors, with author as the exposed director of a tradition conceived from political propaganda. Virgil's Aeneas is exposed as a mere actor, a mere character in poetic and political propaganda.

At a time when the Elizabethan monarch further encouraged the appropriation of Trojan ancestry for England, thus quite intentionally associating English history with Rome's Virgilian "heritage" by means of Brutus' *mythoi*, Marlowe's familiarity with

[27] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 140.

Lucan prompted his own skepticism and discomfort with the consequences of adopting the Trojan/Roman myth of imperialism as English.[28] Brutus, the supposed grandson of Aeneas and namesake of Britain, occupied a significant mythical place in the cultural consciousness of English history, beginning as early as the ninth century in Nennius' *Historia Britonum* and the later *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The revival of Brutus' relationship to England during the early modern period was likewise interrogated by other contemporaries of Marlowe, such as Spenser in his *Faerie Queene*. Rebeca Helfer's article about Arthur's reading of *Britons Moniments* in the *Faerie Queene*, Book II, argues that this moment reveals that "England has built itself upon the spoils of conquest…As in the *Aeneid*, the implied promise of a Trojan ancestry is the repair of ruin…But the lack of 'moniment' implies less that Brutus' golden age left no monuments than that his legend remains historically suspect."[29] By celebrating Trojan origins, royal propaganda reinforces the terrifying reality of "divinely-justified" colonization: that indeed like Rome, "England has built itself upon the spoils of conquest."[30] If such an *ethos* founded England, then what is to prevent Elizabeth from amassing even more (cultural) spoils in the expansion of her power?

Perhaps it too, like Rome, "[would become] so great it could not bear itself" and descend into inevitable tyranny and civil war because "all great things crush

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[28] While her argument is primarily interested in Shakespeare's work, see Heather James for discussion of 16th-17th century political rhetoric tracing English ancestry back to Virgil's Troy. *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, Politics, and the Translation of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 15-8. See also Williams, "Dido, Queen of England."

[29] Rebeca Helfer, "Falling into History: Trials of Empire in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," in *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imagery in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Alan Shepard and Stephen Powell (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004), 245.

[30] Ibid, 245.

themselves."[31] Despite the impossibility of labeling Marlowe a "republican" with any certainty, Cheney's coinage, "republican imagination," describes Marlowe's political views as accurately as is possible, considering "republican" does not enter the English vocabulary until 1691.[32] His plays deploy republican subtexts, even though the word "republican" does not historically appear until after his death. Playwrights so familiar with the Latin language and the Roman *res publica* would have most certainly have had some conception of "republic," especially when their narratives are so obviously sourced from classical myths, such as the *Aeneid*'s Dido. Regarding the argument of this paper, the republican ideology of Lucan's *Pharsalia* need only translate for Marlowe into suspicion and interrogation of Elizabethan propaganda of a Virgilian past. He learned from Lucan the inevitable tyranny imperialism presages.[33] If Elizabeth adopts Brutus—and thus indirectly, Aeneas too—as her predecessor, will she someday become the ruthless Caesar too?

Marlowe re-crafts the *Aeneid* for an Elizabethan audience, and with Lucan as model, hopes to provide a critical lens for the Virgilian narrative and what its chronicle of *arma virumque* really portends.[34] He refocuses Virgil's history back to the defeated Dido,

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[31] *Lucans First Booke*, lines 72, 81.
[32] Cheney, *Marlowe's Republican Authorship*, 4.
[33] Ibid, 1-23. See also ibid, "Milton, Marlowe, and Lucan: The English Authorship of Republican Liberty," *Milton Studies* 49 (2008): 1-19 and ibid, "Defend His Freedom 'gainst a Monarchy: Marlowe's Republican Authorship," in *Textual Conversations in the Renaissance*, ed. by Zachary Lesser and Benedict S. Robinson (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 27-44. See Andrew Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 17-53 who has more thoroughly discussed the uncertain republicanism of Shakespeare's plays but gives a more general context to conceptions of republicanism in the 1590s. He argues that "many cosmopolitan urban intellectuals from the early part of the sixteenth century onwards saw themselves as citizens, akin to the influential figures who dominated the histories of the Roman republic they had all read" (17).
[34] Although being a popular medium for the time, it is especially appropriate that Marlowe rewrites Dido as a theatre production, since *Aeneid* 4 is the most tragic book of the epic. Classicists have discussed Dido's

refusing to elaborate on the Aenean perspective of Rome's beginning. The play's performance by the all male children's troupe, "the Children of her Maiesties Chappell," complicates Marlowe's adaption of Virgil, since Marlowe has chosen to re-tell Virgil not only from the mouth of a powerful foreign woman, but more sacrilegiously from the mouths of school children.[35] Such casting destabilizes the *gravitas* of the *Aeneid* as the epic of [and for] fierce [Roman] men and their martial prowess (*arma virumque cano, Aen.* 1.1), both mocking Virgil's narrative of masculinity and at the same time warning against it as the curriculum of imperialism—of tyranny.[36]

lament as an evocation of Athenian tragedy, such as J.L. Moles, "Aristotle and Dido's *Hamartia*," *Greece & Rome* 31 (1984): 48-54; E.L. Harrison, "The Tragedy of Dido," *EMC* 33 (1989): 1-21; Christopher Nappa, "Unmarried Dido: *Aeneid* 4.550-51," *Hermes* 135.3 (2007): 301-13; and Vassiliki Panoussi, *Greek Tragedy in Vergil's Aeneid: Ritual, Empire, and Intertext* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009).

[35] H.J. Oliver, ed., *Dido, Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1968), xx. This inscription detailing the actors of Marlowe's play is found in the 1594 quarto. According to Oliver, of the *Dido* manuscripts, there exist only "three copies: in the Bodleian, Folger, and Huntington Libraries; and there are no textual variants" (xxi).

[36] See also Bowers, "Hysterics, High Camp, and *Dido Queene of Carthage*," 96-7.

Speculations on the Performance of *Dido*

While much of what we know about the children's troupes who acted Marlowe's *Dido*, as noted on the 1594 folio of the play, remains speculative, a few scholars have theorized the performance and performers of the play.[37] My own consideration of *Dido*'s performance will participate in similar speculation, employing the subjunctive not to diminish confidence in my argument, but to recognize the modicum of information known about the logistics of children's troupes' performances and specifically about the performance of *Dido*. Such speculative space, however, is more conducive to exploring all the implications of the many possibilities in performance choice.

Jackson Cope notes that the boys performing *Dido* would have "ranged in age roughly from eight to thirteen, and were, of course, chosen for their voices, not for their ability as 'realistic' actors."[38] Cope as well as H.J. Oliver agrees that older boys would have played the parts of Jupiter, Venus, Dido, and the Nurse.[39] Ganymede, Cupid, and Ascanius, however, would have been played by younger and smaller boys, not only to indicate their status as younger in comparison to the other "adult" actors, but also because

[37] Oliver, *Dido Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*; Michael Shapiro, "Children's Troupes: Dramatic Illusion and Acting Style," *Comparative Drama* 3 (1969): 42-53; Jackson Cope, "Marlowe's Dido and the Titillating Children," *English Literary Renaissance* 4 (1974): 315-25; Lucy Munro, "The Humour of Children: Performance, Gender, and the Early Modern Children's Companies," *Literature Compass* 2 (2005): 1-26; Crowley, "Arms and the Boy;" and Evelyn Tribble, "Marlowe's Boy Actors," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 27 (2009): 5-17.

[38] Jackson Cope, "Marlowe's *Dido* and the Titillating Children," 316.

[39] Ibid, 319 wonders whether or not Jupiter was played by "the Master or another adult, thus emphasizing the boys' imposed predicament. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was an older boy." The presence of adults onstage certainly complicates any imaginings of *Dido*'s performance, particularly if Jupiter was the not the only adult onstage. Jackson Cope does not consider that Dido might have been played by an adult too then. It seems more likely both Dido and Jupiter were just played by older and taller boys, as "inches are enhanced rapidly as sophistication" (319).

the staging requires Ganymede to be "dandl[ed] upon [Jupiter's] knee" and Ascanius and Cupid to be carried by other actors during the performance.[40] It is unclear how old and how tall Aeneas, his attending martial comrades, and Iarbus would have been.

In his introduction to his 1968 edition of the text, Oliver conjectures Aeneas' height "[was] no taller than his Dido or Anna." Visually, the height of each boy actor establishes his clout onstage, making divinities and main characters more easily discernible. If Aeneas was played by a boy "no taller" than the Carthaginian queen, or perhaps even shorter than her, the effect of his character for the audience would have been quite comic:

> …When a drama such as *Dido* is acted by boys, it is the parts of the women that 'come over' realistically. A schoolboy has no difficulty in conveying the distress of Dido; but a schoolboy Aeneas, perhaps no taller than his Dido and Anna, cannot be much more than a puppet-like figure, no matter how good an actor he may be, and is bound to seem somewhat artificial and even stiff in comparison. Presumably Marlowe knew this, and took it for granted that there were some emotions that he could not

[40] Ibid, 319-20. See also Tribble, "Marlowe's Boy Actors," 6-7, an article unfortunately and quite surprisingly not specific to *Dido*, hypothesizes that some of the roles may have been played by adults as a way of "train[ing] the boy [actor] in the arts and mysteries of the craft." Thus the relationship between some of the older players with the younger ones may have been one of apprenticeship. Of course, this same role of master actor and apprenticing actor could have characterized the relationship between the older boy actors and the youngest boy actors. Most of her argument draws from information on Shakespearean performance rather than Marlovian, as little information is known about the children's troupe(s) who acted *Dido*. She also claims that "many prominent female roles are made up of largely two-person scenes, allowing the process of 'study' for a part to be incorporated into the act of training a boy" (6). Perhaps then the actor playing Dido was indeed an older boy of about twelve or thirteen, and the actor playing Anna was a younger, smaller boy learning how to play female roles more proficiently by using the skill of Dido's acting as model. Naturally the older boys would be more experienced in their rhetorical study and practice than the younger boys, and they may have had a greater repertoire of memorized schoolroom speeches from which to extemporize and personalize their role onstage.

> convey realistically, when he set out to dramatize Virgil for the Children of Her Majesty's Chapel.[41]

Cope, like Oliver, remains hesitant to assume that Aeneas was any taller than Dido's actor, despite "the assumption that would seem most natural is that he was played by an older, larger boy, equal if not superior in size to Dido."[42] His contention relies on Oliver's 1968 speculation about the size of the actors, and like Oliver, fails to elaborate fully on the possibility of a shorter Aeneas. According to Cope, since "Ascanius is small enough to be scooped up and carried by a boy of twelve or thirteen, there is sufficient range of potential physical size in a group of pre-pubescents to allow for an Aeneas large enough to play Ascanius' father, yet smaller than his lover Dido."[43] The aesthetics of an Aeneas smaller than Dido not only transforms the Virgilian hero into Oliver's "puppet-like figure," but subjugates the tradition of Virgilian epic to the theoretical space of Quint's epic of the defeated, the epic of the defeated Dido. Dido's possibly superior height on stage physically displaces the authority of Aeneas' myth as victor and founder of Rome. The audience instead watches him be exploited, a "child Aeneas being uncomprehendingly seduced by a teenage Dido."[44]

Further injury to Aeneas' mythical *gravitas* originates in Oliver's claim that schoolboys were able to convey female roles more effectively, and "a schoolboy [would

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[41] Oliver, *Dido Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*, xxxiii.
[42] Cope, "Marlowe's *Dido* and the Titillating Children," 322.
[43] Ibid, 322.
[44] Ibid, 322. Crowley, "Arms and the Boy, " 411 calls Marlowe's Aeneas "puny," but more with regard to his metaphoric stature throughout the performance. Nonetheless, my imaginings of Aeneas as shorter than Dido at least shares such imaginings with other scholars.

have] no difficulty in conveying the distress of Dido."[45] Her speeches from *Aeneid* 4 were particularly well-studied in grammar school, and it is likely that tedious memorization of the Latin verse affected the boys' comfort in performing the English verse, for they conveyed the *ethos* of Dido as much as her Virgilian hexameter. In this way, Aeneas' presence onstage becomes artificial, contrived, and suddenly the audience finds themselves apprehensive about just how "realistic" Aeneas' Virgilian past ever was, since he now appears in a "puppet-like role as a *boy* among men, women, and poets."[46] Dido, however, remains persuasive, *path*etic, and more authoritative than her Virgilian source because she has assumed the *potentas* of Virgilian Aeneas as her own. Marlowe's Aeneas creates a subversive space for the interrogation of Virgilian epic and the contemporaneous Elizabethan adoption of a Trojan ancestry, but all beneath the guise of Aeneas' comic adaptation and children harmlessly costumed as literature's most famous characters.

If we suppose—and once again, my claims are couched in imagination since there is no evidence of actors' height—a boy actor smaller and shorter than the actor playing Dido, then the entire play hardly seems an adaptation of *Aeneid* 1-4, but rather an almost Tarantinian revenge fantasy in which the audience is able to peer back through the

[45] H.J. Oliver, *Dido, Queen of Carthage and Massacre at Paris,* xxxiii. Perhaps this ability to perform female characters better than male characters resulted from their more detailed study of women's speeches in their rhetorical education. Jackson Cope, "Marlowe's Dido and the Titillating Children," 316-7 notes that "with the rhetorical training [of their Latin studies], the sweet-singing boys were ideally prepared to declaim complex verse."

[46] Cope, "Marlowe's *Dido* and the Titillating Children," 324. Emphasis is my own. See also Crowley, "Arms and the Boy," 432.

curtains of "historical" myth and denigrate its *pius* Aenean protagonist.[47] Although the opening act of *Dido* purports to recount *Aeneid* 1, it carefully elides the narrative both to censor Aeneas' *pathos* and to satirize the epic pantheon's former role as agents of epic plot. The first scene locates us in the realm of the gods, presumably, although unstated, Olympus. *Dido* begins with the audience's "discovery" of "Iupiter dandling Ganimed upon his knee," and the proceeding stanzas mock the divine king of the Virgilian pantheon as he neglects his godly affairs to "[play] with that female wanton boy."[48] His preoccupation with the affections of Ganymede distract him from participating in a reproduction of the *Aeneid* until Venus interrupts his wooing to remind him that "[her] Æneas wanders on the Seas."[49] Venus' first speech condenses the ruinous Odyssean storm of *Aeneid* 1 into less than 30 lines and deprives Aeneas of his famous monologue (*Aen.* 1.94-101) by resigning his *pathos* to reported/indirect speech. Following his entrance onstage, Achates declares Aeneas the "Braue prince of Troy, [who] onely art our God" and their survival of the unstaged storm owes to Aeneas' *virtus* ("That by thy vertues freest vs from annoy").[50] Yet naming Aeneas the "God" of the Trojans directly after Jupiter's lustfully puerile display with Ganymede negates the authority of any divine status for Aeneas, and his epic *virtus* now remains just as absurd as Jupiter's *potestas*.

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[47] I realize that the Quentin Tarantino revenge fantasy genre, notable in his recent cinematic successes, *Django Unchained* and *Inglorious Bastards*, is a bit of an extreme comparison for Marlowe's play, but I want to capture the effect of stripping Virgil's Aeneas of his *vir*-ness.

[48] The opening stage directions for Dido note that "Here the Curtaines draw, there is discovered Jupiter dandling Ganimed upon his knee, and Mercury lying asleepe." Oliver, *Dido, Queen of Carthage and Massacre at Paris*, 4. Venus calls Ganymede "that female wanton boy" (1.1.51). See also Deats, *Sex, Gender, and Desire in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, 91-2 who recognizes that monarchy is ridiculed the moment the "Curtaines draw" because the model for monarchal stability—Jupiter himself—is willing to relinquish his authority and allow Ganymede, the "pleasure to [his] eyes" (1.1.24), "[c]ontroule proud Fate, and cut the thred of time" (1.1.29).

[49] *Dido,* 1.1.52.

[50] *Dido,* 1.1.152-3.

Marlowe's elision of the storm is not intentioned simply for brevity, but rather to trivialize the role of the *Aeneid*'s main actor. This point becomes even more apparent by considering Jupiter's last line in his brief exchange with Venus. He beckons Ganymede, "Come Ganimed, we must be about this geare."[51] A surface reading of "geare" understands Jupiter to be summoning Ganymede to "be about" their Olympic affairs or even martial affairs, as "geare" can connote "warlike accoutrements."[52] Yet, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the word also functioned as a phallic innuendo, and this suggestion colors Jupiter's comment to Ganymede, the "wanton boy" he toyed with on his lap throughout his conversation with Venus.[53] Although the *OED* dates the earliest sexual slang of "geare" to 1675, thus occurring after the late 16th century Marlovian drama, it does not seem improbable that "geare" would be sexually suggestive in *Dido* too, considering its context in Act I. Jupiter's employment of "geare" as "warlike accoutrements" already carries the sexual subtext of masculine *weaponry*. The implication of Jupiter's language being sexually suggestive reveals once more his greater concern with the distracted dandling of Ganymede, and thus subverts Virgilian *pathos* with comedy, ending the scene of Aeneas' calamity with a laugh. The hero loses his grandeur, and Marlowe's players demonstrate how his account of the *Aeneid* is distinctly Lucanian: Virgil's defeated Dido becomes the hero while *pius* Aeneas and his "vertues" are relegated to the derision of indirect speech and school boys snickering at crude, phallic jokes.

[51] *Dido,* 1.1.121.
[52] *OED,* I.2.
[53] *OED,* II.5.b.

In the second half of Act I, when Venus prepares to disguise as Diana, she admits that "[n]ow is the time for me to play my part," just as Cupid proclaims to "play [his] part" at the end of Act II.[54] The actors' self-consciousness of themselves as actors demonstrates to the audience that their presence in the play functions as an overt impersonation and parody of the Virgilian myth. Quint's argument for the chaotic and (sometimes) parodic power of the "epic of the defeated" explains Marlowe's impiety toward Virgilian values. Both *Dido*'s content and the employment of his boy actors "desacrilize [Virgilian] history" in a way consistent with the Lucanian tradition:

> The desacralization of history—at least of history as it has been written by the victors—is an enduring feature of Lucan's tradition. The point of banishing the gods and placing Roman history under the domain of Fortune is to deny the necessity—and the permanence—of the imperial establishment.[55]

Lucan's "banish[ment] [of] the gods" affects his central destabilization and "desacrilization" of epic structure. Although he "flirts with the possibility that supernatural characters will play a role in the narrative," in actuality "the gods do not act in Lucan's poem, for he abandoned the divine machinery, jettisoned the 'Götterapparat.'"[56] Divinities are often nameless in the *Pharsalia*, but always ineffectual, so much so that Caesar becomes a god to the Romans: "[t]here Caesar mayst thou shine

[54] *Dido,* 1.1.182, 2.1.332. Venus also names Cupid the "playfellow" of Ascanius in *Dido*, 2.1.307.
[55] Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 135.
[56] D.C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 270.

and no cloud dim thee / Thou Caesar at this instant art my God."[57] In *Pharsalia* 5.339-42, he even revels in berating his mutinous men with their triviality to the gods [gods who do not really exist], beginning 5.342 with the brief, but horrifying reality: *Fata vacent* ("the Fates are empty/vacant"). Thus, Marlowe's mockery of the Olympian pantheon, his similarly ineffective and "vacant" gods, converses with the more serious implication of Lucan's poem. The loss of divine intervention and organization of the mortal world allows for the dangerous morality of men like Caesar, men who self-proclaim divinity and become divine in their empery (*omnia Caesar erat*, "Caesar was everything").[58] By employing this Lucanian device, Marlowe's *Dido* implies the same modern potentiality and conveys an underlying mistrust in the integrity of a sovereign ruler, but brilliantly concealed by the comedy of schoolboys playing "king" and [Elizabethan] "queen."

[57] *Lucans First Booke,* lines 59-66. The entire passage is as follows:

> There Caesar mayst thou shine and no cloud dim thee;
> Then men from war shall 'bide in league, and ease,
> Peace through the world from Janus' fane shall fly,
> And bolt the brazen gates with bars of iron
> Thou Caesar at this instant art my God,
> Thee if I invocate, I shall not need
> Crave Apollo's aid, or Bacchus' help;
> Thy power inspires the Muse that sings this war.

[58] *Phars.*, 3.108.

Cornelian Dido

Despite featuring prominently in Book 5 and Book 8 of the *Pharsalia*, Cornelia has often been and remains unfortunately overlooked by scholarship. Frederick Ahl's well-known monograph on the poem admits that of the women in Lucan's epic "only Cornelia is given a truly independent characterization; the others [women] are used chiefly to supply an additional *color* to Cato and Caesar."[59] Yet, he nonetheless neglects to give her due consideration apart from her as the referential for her husband, Pompey: Caesar's rival, the poem's central hero, and Ahl's eponymous chapter. Her function according to Ahl's argument is a demonstration of genuine *pathos* and an intimate vignette of Pompey's (and every affected Roman's) personal life.

Likewise, Richard Bruère's earlier article, "Lucan's Cornelia," examines the historical sources for Cornelia, namely Livy, but neglects to analyze her as an epic figure.[60] He prefaces his vague acknowledgment of her literary character with "from the poetic point of view" and concludes with little follow-up apart from "Lucan's account of Cornelia contains many Virgilian reminiscences, especially of the pathetic scenes of the fourth *Aeneid*."[61] David Kubiak's brief commentary on Cornelia and Dido—sadly, less than two pages in length—finds resonances in Cornelia's language in *Pharsalia* 9, particularly *exuvias* ("spoils," "physical remnants") with Dido's *dulces exuviae* ("sweet

[59] Frederick Ahl, *Lucan: An Introduction* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1976), 116.
[60] Richard Bruère, "Lucan's Cornelia," *Classical Philology* 4 (1951): 221-36.
[61] Ibid, 221. He remarks in final paragraphs that "Lucan's portrait of Cornelia owes most to Ovid (the echoes of Virgil's Dido are fleeting and superficial)" (232).

mementos") at the end of *Aeneid* 4.[62] Although Kubiak implores his readers to give further study to possible Didonian echoes in Lucan's heroine, little work has been done on this topic.

Despite the paucity of scholarship on a Didonian Cornelia, Marlowe's own rigorous and fairly contemporaneous study of both Lucan's and Virgil's epics justifies the intertextuality between the two women in his *Dido* more easily than modern Lucanian scholars who must argue for the presence of Virgilian language and imagery in the *Pharsalia.* As noted earlier in this paper, it is probable that Marlowe would have read Lucan after Virgil, but because of "Marlowe's early self-education," it is possible that he might have read Lucan prior to the *Aeneid*.[63] Either way, Marlowe would have read, translated, and referenced both the *Aeneid* and the *Pharsalia* numerous times during his education, thus effortlessly (and perhaps even subconsciously, at times) conflating Dido and Cornelia, permitting his schoolroom recitations/translations of Dido and Cornelia to become entangled and beget the Cornelian Dido who features in his drama.

On basic comparison, Cornelia, like Marlowe's Dido invests her affections in her *second* husband, but spectators familiar with the *Pharsalia*—and at the very least, the actors—would know that Lucan's Cornelia has been predestined to ensure the death of any spouse she takes (*Pharsalia*, 3.21-3), boding ominously for the already diminutively

[62] David Kubiak, "Cornelia and Dido (Lucan 9.174-9)," *Classical Quarterly* 40 (1990): 577-8. All translations in parentheses are my own.

[63] Gill, "Marlowe, Lucan, and Sulpitius," 412. Gill explains further that Marlowe "may have read Ovid, and almost certainly Lucan, while he was at the King's School Canterbury; but it was not perhaps so much the school's teaching as the discipline of translating these writers that made them, and the traditions to which they belonged, his own. He opted to work by *metaphrasis*, the word-for-word, line-for-line method of translation which is the most rigorous of all techniques and the one least likely to produce an aesthetically satisfying result."

statured Aeneas on Marlowe's stage. Dido calls Aeneas "husband" twice (*Dido*, 3.4.62, 4.4.67), while his twice mentioning of "wife" refers not to Dido but to the deceased Creusa (*Dido*, 2.1.267-70). His hesitancy to announce her as his spouse is necessary to maintain the Virgilian frame of the narrative, since it does purport to perform Aenean characters after all. Yet, Marlowe's attenuation of Aeneas redirects the spotlight to Dido who performs the role of lover and beloved by alluding to Cornelia's lament(s) in *Pharsalia* 5.761-815 and 8.637-62.

As the conflict in Italy grows more violent and Pompey's demise more imminent, *Pharsalia* 5 provides a heart-wrenching *mora* from the civil war as Pompey implores Cornelia to leave him and preserve her safety in Lesbos. She eventually relents, but only after interrogating his fidelity, threatening suicide, and begging him to remain with her:

> …[O]ur love is not broken by death
> or by the final torch of hideous pyre, but I lose my husband,
> divorced in a fate frequent and too common…
>
> …Do you believe my safety is different
> from yours? Have we not long depended on one and the same chance?
> Did you bid me, cruel man, present my head to thunderbolts
> and to destruction so immense apart from you? Does it seem to you
> a carefree fate, to have been destroyed while still making prayers?
> Though I refuse to be a slave to hardships but with ready death
> follow you down to the shades, until the gloomy news strikes
> lands far removed, I shall of course live on as your survivor…

…But if my wishes count for anything and the gods
hear me, the last to know of favourable outcome will be your wife:
while you are already victorious, anxiously shall I frequent
the cliffs and dread the ship which brings such a happy end…

…abandoned, in an unprotected place, I can be captured
by Caesar even as he flees. Well known will the shores become
by the exile of a famous name: and who can fail to know
of Mytilene's refuge, if Magnus' wife is lodged there?
(*Phar*. 5.763-86; Braund, 5.763-87)[64]

While Pompey's departure from Cornelia is certainly more pitiable than Aeneas' from Carthage, since "[their] enemy's approach" (5.767) is imminent, Cornelia still predicates

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[64] *…nostros non rumpit funus amores*
Nec diri fax summa rogi, sed sorte frequenti
Plebeiaque nimis careo dimissa marito. 765
Hostis ad adventum rumpamus foedera taedae,
Placemus socerum! Sic est tibi cognita, Magne,
Nostra fides? credisne aliquid mihi tutius esse,
Quam tibi? non olim casu pendemus ab uno?
Fulminibus me, saeve, iubes tantaeque ruinae 770
Absentem praestare caput? secura videtur
Sors tibi, cum facias etiamnunc vota, perisse?
Ut nolim servire malis sed morte parata
Te sequar ad manes, feriat dum maesta remotas
Fama procul terras, vivam tibi nempe superstes. 775
Adde, quod adsuescis fatis tantumque dolorem,
Crudelis, me ferre doces. Ignosce fatenti,
Posse pati, timeo. Quod si sunt vota, deisque
Audior, eventus rerum sciet ultima coniux.
Sollicitam rupes iam te victore, tenebunt, 780
Et puppem, quae fata ferat tam laeta, timebo.
Nec solvent audita metus mihi prospera belli,
Cum vacuis proiecta locis, a Caesare possim
Vel fugiente capi. Notescent litora clari
Nominis exsilio, positaque ibi coniuge Magni 785
Quis Mytilenaeas poterit nescire latebras?

her lament on his violation of the "pact of [their] marriage-torch" (5.5.767). His choice to face Caesar functions as the *protasis* to her conditional contention, in which the *apodosis* is inevitably her death ("Do you believe my safety is different / from yours?," *Phar.*, 5.768-9). Marlowe's Dido too cites Aeneas' breach of marital vows, exclaiming that "O thy lips haue sworne / To stay with *Dido*" and "Thy Hand and mine haue plighted mutuall faith!" (*Dido,* 5.1.120-2). She argues for him to stay because "By this right hand, and by our spousall rites, / [she] Desires Æneas to remaine with her" (*Dido*, 5.1.134-5). Cornelia's warning that his abandonment affects her death is implicit in Dido's speech by Act 5. Yet, earlier in Act 4 before Aeneas has left, she presents the audience with a similar conditional statement, proclaiming in her monologue that "If he forsake me not, I neuer dye" (*Dido*, 4.4.121). Of course, the familiarity of the Virgilian myth assures that the Dido *will* die, since Aeneas *will* abandon her in Carthage. And certainly, if he had "forsake[n] her not," then she would ensure her immortality by changing the entire outcome of the Virgilian narrative. In anticipating his departure, however, she relies of the Pharsalian rhetoric of Cornelia's plea and hopes to persuade Aeneas to stay by yoking her survival/demise to his.

In *Pharsalia* 8.651-60, Cornelia's threats of suicide become more sincere, as she watches her husband die in front of her, lamenting, "Allow me, sailors, to make a headlong leap or fit / the noose and twisted ropes around my neck, or let some comrade / truly worthy of Magnus, drive the sword right through" (*Phar.,* 8.654-6). Cornelia prefigures the desperation of Marlowe's Dido, when she first confronts Aeneas about leaving for Italy. Dido, like Cornelia, conflates her survival with Aeneas' presence in

Carthage which suggests that she too believes their lives are bound together. Such allusions to Cornelia in Marlowe's Dido intensify the legitimacy of her emotion for Aeneas in a play so invested in and driven by the farce of its mythical framework; and at the same time, these allusions render the boy Aeneas more ridiculous and more inferior to Dido. For, he is no Pompey.

The most striking allusion to Cornelia in Dido, however, occurs in her character's repetition of "stay," especially in her final speeches. The word appears forty-one times throughout *Dido*, eighteen of which are spoken by Dido. Even in Aeneas' mimicry of her, he anticipates that she will "crye stay, *Æneas*, stay" (*Dido*, 4.3.52). This verbal recurrence recalls the noticeable use of *mora* ("delay," "pause," "a staying") throughout the *Pharsalia*. The word appears especially in Cornelia's speeches to Pompey with conspicuous repetition of its anagrams, *amor* ("love"), *Roma* ("Rome"), and forms of *mors* ("death") which share a deceptively similar sound with *mora*. This feature of the play seems especially Lucanian, and for an audience familiar with the Latin counterpart of the English "stay," the resounding subtext of Lucanian *mora* would have also been *mors* ("death"): the *mors* both of Dido and the charade of Virgilian tradition.

In his article on *Lucans First Booke*, Gill notes Marlowe's particular sensitivity to the sound of Latin words and contends that his attunement to Latin meter and accentuation encouraged him to incorporate similar auditory effect in his English compositions too.[65] Perhaps, then, Dido's insisting that Aeneas "stay" in the final acts reflects Lucan's *mora* in an effort to evoke the pleas of Cornelia. At the very least,

[65] Roma Gill, "Marlowe, Lucan, and Sulpitius," 410.

assuming some range of familiarity amongst the audience with the original Latin phrases of the *Pharsalia*, his boy actors, and especially the mature youth playing Dido, could most likely have recognized the repetitive "stay"/*mora* from their grammar school study, infusing their performance in *Dido* with their prior performances and recitations of the *Pharsalia* in the classroom.

Yet the Marlovian resonances with Cornelia compel the audience to wonder who "plays" Pompey in this allusion. Certainly, it is not the reticent Aeneas, who disappears from the stage during Dido's most passionate speech. It seems then that Marlowe's Lucanian Dido possibly incorporates the characters of both Pompey and Cornelia. Dido's curious proclamation (and invocation to herself), "with these reliques burne thy selfe, / And make Æneas famous through the world / for periurie and slaughter of a Queene" (*Dido*, 5.1.292-4), echoes Pompey's pronouncement that his death will make Cornelia famous. He claims, as she did in Book 5, that their lives are yoked in such a way that his death grants her the fame he will not live to experience. He reassures her that "[she] has[s] an avenue to fame which will endure for centuries…Now I [Pompey] bring you greater glory" (*Phar.,* 8.74-8).[66] Yet what Pompey reveals in the final moments before his death is not his infallible devotion to Cornelia, but rather his own narcissism. He wants her to outlive him because he considers her a prosthetic of himself, the *pars optima Magni* ("the best part of Magnus," *Phar*., 5.757). Her survival functions as his legacy, and he desires to preserve that through her as his wife, as a "part" of him. Marlowe's

[66] *...Habes aditum mansurae in saecula famae.*
Laudis in hoc sexu non legum cura nec arma, *75*
Unica materia est coniux miser. Erige mentem,
Et tua cum fatis pietas decertet, et ipsum,
Quod sum victus, ama. Nunc sum tibi gloria maior.

Dido muddles this sentiment so that she plays both lamenting Cornelia and her grief-stricken (yet confidently departing) husband, and thus demonstrates Marlowe's ability to compose a *plus quam* epic love scene, while simultaneously criticizing epic *amor* as inherently narcissistic.[67]

Epic love is necessarily tragic love because it has been tirelessly narrated by the patriarchal perspective of epic that forbids its heroes to "dure this female drudgerie" (*Dido*, 4.3.55). Ilioneus bids Aeneas in Act 4 to leave Carthage because staying/delaying deprives Aeneas of his sole position of power; it deprives him of the masculine conquest so intrinsic to the epic tradition. Once the Trojan veterans are alone, they reduce Dido from emperoress to "ticing dame" and angrily proclaim,

> …this is no life for men at armes to liue,
> Where daliance doth consume a Souldiers strength,
> And wanton motions of alluring eyes
> Effeminate our mindes inur'd to warre (*Dido*, 4.3.31-6).

Aeneas' men prod him to "let vs build a Citie of our owne / And not stand lingering here for amorous lookes" (*Dido*, 4.3.37-8). The irony could become apparent in the possibly petite stature of Aeneas and his comrades. His refusal to "dure" Dido's "female

[67] Though most scholars consider the scenes between Lucan's Pompey and Cornelia to be exemplary expressions of genuine affection, Frederick Ahl, like myself, remains skeptical about Pompey's motivations in leaving Cornelia. His speech reveals his uxoriousness and narcissism because he wishes Cornelia to remain in Lesbos to ensure the survival of *pars optima Magni* ("the greatest part of Magnus," *Pharsalia*, 5.757). His conception of Cornelia exists as referential to himself, and Frederick Ahl wonders "whether the tears spring from his eyes because he realizes that Cornelia really loves him, or because he recalls everything that he has lost in the war." *Lucan: An Introduction*, 177.

drudgerie" could certainly arouse laughter because of his wordplay with the Latin *durus* ("hard").[68] The verbal echoes of Aeneas' use of "dure" with *durus* expose the absence of his own "hardness": his lack of epic virility and the Virgilian capacity to conquer and colonize the narrative. Marlowe's Dido subverts the Virgilian definition of epic love by making Dido both Cornelia and Pompey and featuring her as narrator of the story and emotions of *both* lovers, subsequently outperforming both Virgil and Lucan.

[68] *Durus* has the literal meaning "hard," but also connotations of "manliness" and "impenetrability." Unyielding women in Latin elegy are frequently called *dura* to denote both their hardness of heart and their sexual unavailability to the lover. Ovid uses forms of *durus* and *dura* often in the more sexual sense, and it seems likely Marlowe would not have included "dure" haphazardly in Dido as a reference to *durus* and *dura*.

Conclusion

Crowley's claim that *Dido* is a "quasi-tragedy" supports the claim of this paper, except that he fails to engage thoroughly with the Lucanian elements of Marlowe's main character.[69] His conclusion about the play remains too influenced by the Ovidian features he ascribes to *Dido*, and thus his term "quasi-tragedy" indicates only the humor of Marlowe's drama and avoids the serious implications that lie beneath the parodic, laughter-inducing moments. We can label Aeneas as quasi-epic and even quasi-tragic in Marlowe's rendition of the Virgilian episode, but Dido is decidedly not. Any careful, veteran reader of Ovid understands that behind Ovid's comic transformation of epic convention, the content of his works still retain the weight of epic, notably the unsettlingly frequency of sexual violence in the first half of his *Metamorphoses*. Likewise, Lucan's derision of Virgilian epic becomes at times quite campy in its excessive gore, but his narrative does not bear any less—in fact, arguably, it bears more—*gravitas* than Virgil's. The comic moments function as a relief for the overwhelming tension of Lucan's own cynicism at Rome's historical present. It is such Lucanian intention that Marlowe appropriates.

As Marlowe's play refuses to allow Aeneas to drive the emotion of the plot, his character should not be debated as "tragic" or not "tragic," but rather comic and a negligible prop in the reenactment of a familiar myth. Dido, however, becomes even more tragic on the Elizabethan stage, not simply because she fulfills the *telos Aeneid* 4

[69] Crowley, "Arms and the Boy," 432.

preordained for her, but because she does so without the severity and *pathos* of Aeneas. Crowley reads this adaption as one that "hardly bears the generic weight of tragedy because the play omits the emotional conflict felt by both characters in Vergil's epic."[70] Yet the omission of an "emotional conflict felt by both characters" is exactly the intention of *Dido*. In depriving Aeneas of his role as epic protagonist, Marlowe must also deprive him of his role as tragic protagonist too. Dido drives her own narrative on this stage, in truly Lucanian fashion, she is the *plus quam* Dido of the Virgilian epic, and her tragedy promises even more *pathos* when she plays both protagonist and antagonist to her own demise.

When she begins referring to herself in the third person in Act 5, proclaiming "Dido" and "Aeneas" with conspicuously sparse use of pronouns, she consumes the stage as a *deus ex machina* narrator reciting the story of the lovers as author rather than actor/player. Such authority places her in the role of *pseudo*-director, and such an imagining becomes even more convincing if we might imagine the boy playing Dido claimed the tallest stature onstage. Aeneas' brief, intermittent responses to her remain extraneous to the trajectory of the narrative, and his disappearance from the stage in 5.1.183 in the midst of her long speech goes unperceived by the audience until she herself realizes and *declares* his absence in 5.1.184 ("is he gone?") and 5.1.192 ("ah, hees gone hees gone!"). Dido finishes her own story *and his* since Marlowe writes no *Aeneid* 5 to invite the diminutive Aeneas back onto the stage.

[70] Ibid, 432.

Her death speech rewrites Aeneas' Virgilian legacy as the *conditor* of Rome and instead solely immortalizes him "famous through the world / for periurie and slaughter of a Queene" (*Dido*, 5.1.293-4). Her castigation of his sword, which performed a "crime…worse then his" (*Dido*, 5.1.297) recalls the proem of Lucan's *Pharsalia* in which the powerful Romans (*populumque potentem, Phar.,* 1.2) thrust their swords into their own entrails (*In sua victrici conversum viscera dextra, Phar.,* 1.3). Marlowe translates these lines powerfully in his *Lucans First Booke*: "and people strong…whose conquering swords their own breasts launched." Suicide, in Lucan's epic, represents the death of republican rule. Dido's self-directed death ("Liue false Æneas, truest *Dido* dyes;") ensures the death of Carthage too, since she herself performs the Carthaginian body politic.[71] Her reiteration of the Virgilian curse ("And from mine ashes let a Conquerour rise," *Dido*, 5.1.306) loses its effect because as soon as she leaps onto the funeral pyre, the two remaining Carthaginians onstage, Anna and Iarbus, follow her to their death. The empty stage—and thus the empty Carthaginian kingdom—suggests the futility of her curse as there are no people left with which to propagate and produce Dido's "conqueror."

Rather, Dido's death by means of her own "conquering sword" invokes Lucan's anger at the myth of Virgilian imperialism and the inevitable tyranny it births. Nearly

[71] *Dido*, 5.1.312. Cato's *vulnus* ("wound") throughout the *Pharsalia* symbolizes the civil wound of the republic and Rome. The most explicit account of his suicide occurs in Plutarch's *Life of Cato* 70.8-10. Cato's first attempt at suicide is interrupted by servants who discover him pierced by his own sword, but still alive. After being treated and stitched up by a doctor, he proceeds to tear open his wound with his hands, rip out his entrails and finally expire. Dido too dies at the second wounding, since in *Dido* 2.1.332-3 Cupid resolves to wound Dido: "I will, fair mother; and so play my part / As every touch shall *wound* Queen Dido's heart." Emphasis is my own. When she falls upon Aeneas' sword in the final scene, she is reopening the wound Cupid already caused. For more information on Cato's suicide in Plutarch's account, see Alexei Zadorojnyi, "Cato's Suicide in Plutarch," *Classical Quarterly* 57 (2007): 216-30.

fifteen centuries later, Marlowe's Dido finally finishes the two unwritten books of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, books Lucan's own suicide prohibited him from writing. By tearing through her entrails with Aeneas' sword, Marlowe's Dido performs both her own *denouement* and that of the *Pharsalia*. The "worse crime" of the Virgilian myth survives always as the sword which murders *libertas* in its lust for empery.[72] The "hyperbol[e]" and "farce" Crowley assigns to the final lines of the play—epic characters superfluously "dying" at the performance of schoolboys—functions as Marlowe's attempt to enact the *plus quam* convention of Lucanian epic, and he too expects, just as Lucan at the *Pharsalia*'s campiness, his audience to giggle with incredible discomfort at the sight of his puerile actors hurling themselves onto a playful "dogpile" of a Virgilian pyre.[73]

What such giggles achieve is a safe expression for emotions more potent than those piqued by epic solemnity: the audience's sublatent uneasiness with the reality of what Marlowe's "farce" portends. For if Elizabethan England resurrects Virgilian Troy as its own myth and aetiology, then will Elizabeth become another Elissa?[74] A *plus quam* Elissa? Will England too be ruled by dangerous tyranny whose only choice is to launch "conquering swords into their own breasts?" Indeed, will it too erupt into "civil broils" and find its own execution upon a familial pyre: not only Dido's, but Cornelia's and Pompey's too? If only Marlowe would have lived to see the civil violence of the 1640s his play anticipated, threatened, and most of all, feared.

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[72] *Dido*, 5.1.297.
[73] Scholars have not noted the possibility of the boy actors ad-libbing any of the play's action, but the end of *Dido* lends itself well to dramatic, laughter-inducing leaping onto the pyre with the self-slain heroine.
[74] Dido, before Virgil, was known as Elissa, and retains the name as an occasional epithet in later traditions. Williams, "Dido, Queen of England," 33 notes that "Elizabeth's association with Dido can be explained, in part, by her name."

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